

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 16, and 17 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 16, and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto (USP 5,743,115) in view of Ando et al. (JP 2001-276484) and Spriggs et al. (USP 5,873,268). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states, in paragraph 18:

Note that for the controller limitations to be given patentable weight, those limitations must recite that the controller is “configured to” or “programmed to” perform those tasks which are to be given patentable weight.

There is also a similar statement in paragraph 20.

In view of the foregoing statements, independent claims 1, 7, and 17 have been amended, as indicated by the Examiner to overcome this rejection.

More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to claim:

wherein, the control unit is configured to:

measure time of duration of each period of a predetermined process in a laundry washing session,

control, in the predetermined process, at least one of the metal ion adding portion and the treatment substance adding portion, so that at least one of the metal ions and the treatment substance is added to the water in the washing tub and attached to a surface of laundry, the predetermined process including,

first and second powerful swirl periods and a mild swirl period, or

first and second powerful swirl periods and a still period,

control the water flow controlling portion based on the measured time, such that the mild swirl period or still period comes after the first powerful swirl period

and the second powerful swirl period comes after the mild swirl period or still period, the second powerful swirl period being shorter than the first powerful swirl period, and

control the water flow controlling portion based on the measured time, such that the time of the predetermined process is longer when metal ions are added than when no metal ions are added but the treatment substance is added.

Applicants submit that Hashimoto, Ando, and Spriggs, taken singly or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a controller configured to perform the foregoing tasks as recited in claim 1.

Further, claim 8 has been amended to claim:

wherein the control unit is configured to:

detect whether the metal ions have been added to the water in final rinsing before a squeezing process,

control the metal ion adding portion to add the antimicrobial metal ions to the water in the washing tub in a predetermined process in a laundry washing session, and

wherein the control unit is configured to, when the unbalance detecting portion detects unbalance in the washing tub during squeezing rotation of the washing tub performed thereafter, detect that the metal ions have been added in the final rinsing, control the unbalance correcting portion and the metal ion adding portion to execute rinsing for correcting uneven spreading of laundry in which, while water having the metal ions added thereto is supplied, agitation is performed.

Applicants submit that Hashimoto, Ando, and Spriggs, taken singly or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a controller configured to perform the foregoing tasks as recited in claim 8.

Yet further, claim 17 has been amended to claim:

wherein, the control unit is configured to:

detect whether the metal ions have been added to the water in final rinsing before a squeezing process,

control the metal ion adding portion to add the metal ions to the water in the washing tub in a predetermined process in a laundry washing session, and

wherein the control unit is configured to, when the unbalance detecting portion detects unbalance in the washing tub during squeezing rotation of the washing tub performed thereafter, detect the metal ions have been added in the final rinsing, control the unbalance correcting portion to execute rinsing for correcting uneven spreading of laundry in which, while water having no metal ions added thereto is supplied, agitation is performed, and control the informing portion to give an indication and/or notification that water having no metal ions added thereto is being supplied.

Applicants submit that Hashimoto, Ando, and Spriggs, taken singly or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest a controller configured to perform the foregoing tasks as recited in claim 17.

Claims 4, 5, 7, and 16, dependent on claim 1, are allowable at least for their dependency on claim 1.

Claim 10, dependent on claim 8, is allowable at last for its dependency on claim 8.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw this rejection.

Conclusion

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of the pending claims in the present application are respectfully requested.


The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final in that it raises no new issues. Alternatively, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final in that it places the application in better form for Appeal.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Maki Hatsumi, Registration No. 40417 at the telephone number of the undersigned below to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Director is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any fees required during the pendency of the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

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Respectfully submitted,

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